



Drought Proof Your Lawn:

Develop Deep Root Systems by Watering Deeply & Infrequently

Most lawns have very shallow root systems due to improper watering. Too many water daily with inappropriately high amounts of water. Keeping the ground saturated results in the grass developing shallow root systems that often stay within an inch of the immediate surface. This causes many problems.

The top inch of soil dries out and heats quickly on hot days. This has a dual negative effect on the grass. In addition to possibly drying out the soil and having no water available, the grass and soil may heat up beyond about 90 degrees Fahrenheit, causing the grass to go into a less efficient state and impeding its ability to take up water.

Grass with a large, deep root system is able to reach into the cooler, damper regions of soil and remain vigorous during the heat. It is also more competitive and resilient toward weed establishment and can survive insect attacks with less visible effects.

In order to get your lawn off “life support,” water deeply with $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inches of water per watering, 2 to 3 times per week (depending on weather and soil type). Set out non-tapered cocoa mugs on your lawn and time your sprinklers to see how long it takes to fill them to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch. This will enable you to determine how long to run your system.

Watch for weekly articles about how to drought proof your lawn. Questions may be directed to Darwin Bundy at dbundy@lehi-ut.gov.